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ABSTRACT

The booklet presents guidelines for educators in the use of television to disseminate information about their schools or programs. It was designed as a supplement to the "use of television for vocational education teachers and administrators" presentation. Suggestions are offered about the right to use television, approaching the station manager, working with a talk show, working with a reporter, preparing show cards and visuals, and getting one's own program. A brief list of resources for television information dissemination is included. (NJ)

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USING THE EYES OF TELEVISION: A Sourcebook for Disseminators

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Kentucky Bureau of Vocational Education

1975

USING THE EYES OF TELEVISION:

A Sourcebook for Disseminators

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Kentucky
Bureau of Vocational Education

VT 102 304

"Using the Eyes of Television" is designed as a supplement to the Use of Television for Vocational Education Teachers and Administrators presentation. It is not intended to answer all of the questions concerning getting and using air time, nor should it be implied that the remarks presented here are correct for all situations.

Specific questions concerning the use of television in order to disseminate information concerning your program can always be addressed to:

Coordinator of Dissemination
Bureau of Vocational Education
2007 Capital Plaza Tower
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(502) 564-3096

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INTRODUCTION

A good dictionary can tell you that the word "television" is a composite of the Greek word "tele" and the Latin word "video." When both are combined, we have "televideo" or "for vision" in its literal translation.

The term is probably a good one because television not only creates a visual in our mind's eye when we think of it, but it also creates a need to determine what our best choice should be in the way of selecting our information dissemination media. The channel selection dial is an electronic magic lantern show with each registered numeral coming to represent a carefully produced program which must play to the idiosyncrasies of eye and ear.

Since no one in the disseminator's TV audience is a multi-headed monster with eighteen eyes to view nine times as much as we do with our two, the disseminator is always reminded of our mortal limitations when we view a program from the image orthicon tube that transmits pictures (with accompanying audio) from 13 VHF channels and 80 plus UHF channels--though never at the same time!

These channels can feature such programs as documentaries, sports, newscasts, movies, panel shows, musicals, educational programs, and especially, public service announcements.

If the offerings of television are many, the expenses are many, too. Each channel represents an ownership that obtains its income by renting time and facilities on a local and nation-wide basis.

This booklet hopes to demonstrate the ways and means of using the "electronic genie" for the dissemination of information about your school, or department, or project, or program, without meeting with too many dead ends and too little air time.

YOUR RIGHT TO USE TELEVISION

When the Federal Communications Commission first began to develop, much discussion was given to the public's rights and interests as they were to be affected by the new "electronic media." What the Congress finally decided when they established the FCC, was that the "airwaves" belonged to no one in particular: they were the property of the people.

Because of this "ownership" of the airwaves by the public, millions of dollars worth of air time is given by the broadcast industry every year for public service announcements. To merit a share of this crowded air time for your program, your activities must appeal to a widespread audience.

Broadcast time is limited by the clock. Newspapers can expand their page numbers to conform to the needs of the day. But radio and television stations are limited to the hours they are licensed to be on the air. Thus, competition for air time is even more intense than for newspaper space.

Study the programs your local stations carry before you begin to make station contacts. List the ideas you have for various shows which reach the audience you need to influence. Don't force the station to match its programming to your desires, match your desires to their programming. Here are a few possibilities offered by the Sperry and Hutchinson Company in their booklet Publicity Handbook:

-- Live or transcribed (recorded) interviews.

-- Music programs laced with local news.

-- Panel or group discussions.

-- Early morning or late evening talk shows.

-- News items in the form of community bulletin board or town crier format.

-- Editorials which present the station's support of community-wide programs and projects.

Radio and television stations are usually very happy to help the schools and educational programs which lie in their listening area to get their story across to the public. It is up to you to use your ingenuity and good judgement in dealing with the station's operations staff.

APPROACHING THE STATION MANAGER

Every radio or television station has someone who is responsible for the programming and operation of the station. These people work under various titles but are generally listed as:

General Manager

Manager

Operations Director

Program Director

Station Manager

Traffic Director

In the larger stations positions may even exist which deal with the educational news area. Sometimes these people are identified in the station bureaucracy as:

News Director

Public Service Director

Education Writer

Before you approach the radio or television station, you should know pretty well who you are going to be talking to. An easy way to find out the name of the General Manager or News Director of your local station, is to request from South Central Bell Telephone Company a copy of their publication Kentucky News Media Directory. The Directory can be obtained free of charge from your local Bell telephone office; or, if you are not in the Bell system, by writing South Central Bell, State Public Relations Office, P. O. Box 538, Louisville, Kentucky 40201. The Directory can also be obtained by calling 502-583-8636.

The Media Directory is an invaluable guide for those wanting to use the Media and gives name and phone number of every General Manager and/or News Director for every radio and television station in Kentucky. All of the stations are listed in alphabetical order according to the name of the city they broadcast from, so it should be rather easy to track down the stations in your geographical area.

Once you know which stations you want to contact, make a call and set up an appointment to see the station manager. If possible, follow this phone call up with a letter.

Know what you want from the station before you go there. The station gets paid to work up programming, so don't tell them you want to get some coverage on your programs and leave it up to them to work out. If you know that the television station has a noon talk show, ask if it would be possible to get on as a guest. If you would like more general news coverage of your school and its programs, ask him if you can keep him informed by keeping in touch with the news director.

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

KNOW WHETHER HIS PROGRAM FORMAT WILL ALLOW HIM TO HELP YOU

ASK HIM WHETHER OR NOT HE IS WILLING TO BE OF ASSISTANCE

ALWAYS POINT OUT THAT YOU WANT TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO HIM AND HIS NEWS EFFORT

The program director will make all of the final decisions as to what goes on the air, but he will more than welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Never ask a station to publicize bingo or a lottery in any form. It is against the law.

Be as friendly as possible when you visit the station. Ask for their cooperation in giving your newsworthy items air time. Do they have interview shows, pre-recorded feature shows? Ask them if you fit into these formats. How do they like news releases prepared? Make careful notes of all of these answers.

Before you start to work on a program, be sure to visit your local station during rehearsal and broadcasting to observe the activity. This observation should give you some idea of what is expected of you before you get behind the microphone or go on camera.

The station may be reluctant to give you time at first because they fear "educational" programs may be dull. When you talk to the station personnel, don't become so engrossed in getting your message across that you fail to attack the basic problem of gaining and holding the audience's attention. You must convince the program director that your program will be entertaining as well as informative in order to hold the listener's attention.

If the program director is in agreement with you about the need for the program, don't complain about the time of day offered for your school broadcast. It probably won't be the hour with the top audience rating: naturally the best time goes to those who pay for it. If your program is good enough, you can attract an audience. You may even be able to boost the audience rating for the time you are allotted and this will increase your popularity with the station management.

Sometimes the local station will assign its staff of technicians and specialists to assist you in preparing your program, providing you have something worth broadcasting. Many times the station staff will help you

to produce programs if you can convince them that your program meets a specific need of the audience and is newsworthy. For example, a program on vocational programs and opportunities for the unemployed might appeal very much to a station broadcasting in an area of high unemployment.

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WORKING WITH THE TALK SHOW

The television talk show is probably one of the best known broadcast formats.

It is usually presented as group of from two to five people, arranged in a setting which will allow them to talk freely and engage in rather unlimited conversation. Most talk shows, particularly on the local level, have a host who is also the moderator; but some talk shows (such as Meet the Press) may have more than one moderator or a number of questioners.

The talk show is a very fine platform for your school's communication effort.

If the station manager is able to get you into the talk show "line-up," follow station suggestions for selecting people to represent your school on the air. For most shows they are likely to suggest a person with a pleasant speaking voice who is not given to nervousness.

Be sure the person is well informed on the subject to be discussed. A series of small index cards with pertinent data offer a form of mental insurance against momentary lapses of memory.

Be sure that the person being interviewed also understands the need to follow exactly the directions given to him by the program director and the floor director. He will tell your 'talent' how and where to sit, where the cameras will be placed, how to use the microphone, and how to avoid unnecessary noise while on the air.

Television requires that your talent remember a few basic rules of dress. Suits or dresses of soft, medium colors or pastels are best.

Sharply contrasting patterns and colors, noisy bracelets, sparkling or highly polished jewelry are also bad.

In the old days of television make-up was important. Today, with modern color cameras, make-up is not important. If you desire make-up --go light. Don't worry about glasses or a bald head! The crew can arrange lighting accordingly.

Tell the talent not to worry and to react normally. The audience is expecting to see a human, not an actor.

WORKING WITH A REPORTER

Many times the television station will be more than willing to work with you but will be unable to fit you into their regular programs. They may not even produce a program which has a talk show/interview format.

In this case, they may be willing to make you a part of their regular news coverage. If so, they will probably send a reporter and cameraman to your school to get the story.

When working with a reporter, always try to be available when he comes to your school. If possible, work out a mutually satisfactory time schedule for regular visits. Even if you have a regular visit schedule, give the reporter advance notice whenever you can of a school event or project. Help him get background information on school stories by digging up the facts for him. Lose no opportunity to be of service.

Don't demand promises that the story will get on the air that day, or that it will ever go out. The decision is not his, and he is as anxious as you that it will be televised quickly.

If you are working with reporters from more than one station, don't give out exclusives and don't alternate stories. Give all the station reporters an equal chance at the news. However, if a reporter comes to you for information about a story he thought up, don't tell it to the other stations.

Never evade or side-step a reporter's questions. He may think that you have something to hide. You may refer him to an administrator or someone on a policy-making level if he asks about a question which affects important policy. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so, then

try to help him find the information from someone else who would know. If it involves data not yet available, be sure to send him the information when it is ready.

You can help the cameraman by preparing the students, committee members, or whoever he is going to film, prior to his arrival. Stand by prepared to write down the names of people he is filming in the order in which they are being filmed.

Let the cameraman select the students who will, in his opinion, best get across the point. Let him plan the shooting but make sure that the filming is not overly posed and that there are no objectionable scenes (one certainly wouldn't want to have a demonstration film made which shows students involved in activities which OSHA wouldn't approve of).

In the event of a ceremony involving a rehearsal, invite the film crew to the rehearsal where they can film the proceedings in advance of the event in comparative leisure and calm.

PREPARING SHOW CARDS AND VISUALS*

Many times the station will be willing to use a slide or visual which you have prepared as part of their station announcement. This is usually no more than a 35mm slide which shows a scene (such as a photo of your school) with a logo or phrase superimposed upon it.

The television show card is relatively easy to make and can be made into a 35mm slide at your school, or by the station.

Show cards are cards which present white letters on a black background (a "super card") or a card which gives wording plus a visual (a "title card").

Super Cards

For the super card the card or paper used for the background should be very black (don't use dark greys) and have a dull finish. Cards with a gloss will reflect light, causing the reflected areas to show up as white on camera. Some types of paper which can be used for super cards are:

--black crescent board

--roll black paper

--construction paper

--white card stock sprayed with flat black paint.

Lettering on the super card should be very large. Normal size is about 48 pt and up. Stay away from lettering that is too thin in body. Gothic and bold type fares seem to work the best with lines or other designes following the same rules. Any line which is smaller than 3/16 inch should be avoided.

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*The majority of this section was taken from a fine paper developed by Mr. Chuck Crume of the Division of RTV-F, Western Kentucky University.

Be sure that white covers the black completely. Chalks, oil sticks and water color whites will not do the job. The following materials give the best results:

--Hot Press letters

--Ink Press letters

--Press-on letters such as Deca-dry, Letraset and Tactype

--Chart-pac tape for line work

--Smooth white paper

--Contact paper for cut-out art

--Liquitex white acrylic paint.

If you are using a thick white stock as a cut-out, paste on a black background and be sure to black the edges of the letters with a black felt-tip pen or dry-mark.

Take care to keep the super card clean and free of fingerprints or any dust or lint. Also avoid the use of other black media on the card. India ink, for example, will dry to a shine and should not be used to correct a light trouble area. If spot corrections are necessary, use lamp black, water color or Mars Black acrylic; lamp black being the first choice.

The key to a good super card is good contrast.

If the super card is to be changed into a slide, it may be shot with a 35mm camera with color film 1 to 2 f-stops under exposed.

Take care to line the card square in the camera viewfinder as crooked lettering is impossible to correct after it has been mounted in slide form.

Title Cards

There are a number of ways to produce good, and yet inexpensive, title cards. For someone with little or no art background, photographs or magazine cut-outs are the best source of illustrations. Care should be taken in using

copyrighted materials. Such material used as part of a commercial presentation could result in a law suite.

The best title card is one which has the elements of creative thought. The visual matter of the card must stimulate the viewer, but the written title is the most important element and should not be over-shadowed by the visual elements.

There is no limit, or substitute, for creativity in the rendering of title cards. Ideas, though, may be hard to come by for the beginner. Magazine illustrations, posters, and television graphics, usually reflect modern trends of visualization and may be sources for your own ideas. You probably won't want to copy these exactly but by changing the subject and retaining the basic layout you will be working with the ideas of some of the world's most creative designers.

When you produce cards in color, always remember that they will also be seen in black-and-white! Be sure that the colors used have enough contrast to come off well on monochrome.

If the title card is to be made into a slide, it should be shot in the same way as the super card but at the correct exposure.

GETTING YOUR OWN PROGRAM

The groundrules for getting a program devoted to your school or regional vocational education program on the air is much the same as getting on the air to begin with. You should be able to demonstrate to the station manager that a public service will be done by starting this program and that it will be able to get, hold, and keep an audience over a period of time.

Give him a complete run-down of what the program will be like and, if possible, give him some idea of what the proposed programs over the year will deal with. If you don't have some ideas about who will be on your program and what they will be talking about, the station manager will be very hesitant to give you time.

Television programs, even simple ones, are expensive to produce and air. Remember that the station makes all of its money from advertising. Check with business and industry in your area before you go to the station and find out if they would be willing to advertise on your program. You should give them as complete a run-down on the proposed program as you would give the station manager and you should be prepared to answer some hard questions. Remember: it's <u>their</u> money you are spending.

Getting time for your own show is not as hard as it sounds, but it does require work and it does require that you give the station manager an interesting, well-thoughtout package.

TELEVISION INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR DISSEMINATORS

If You Want Air Time, available from the Public Relations Service, National Association of Broadcasters, 1771 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Communicating With the Public, National School Public Relations Association, 1801 N. Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. $2.00.

Publicity Handbook, The Sperry and Hutchinson Company, Consumer Relations Division, 3003 East Kemper Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45241.

Keeping the Public Informed, Cooperative Accountability Project, Colorado Department of Education, 1362 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80203.

Television Graphics, Division of Radio, Television and Film, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101.

Kentucky News Media Directory, South Central Bell, State Public Relations Office, P. O. Box 538, Louisville, Kentucky 40201.